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**DeNUCCI OKAYS STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY'S
NEW CONTRACT FOR FERRY SERVICE**

State Auditor Joe DeNucci reported today that the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority has complied with the Commonwealth's privatization law in awarding a contract to a private firm to provide ferry service between New Bedford and Martha's Vineyard this summer.

DeNucci's determination disclosed that the contract will be less expensive than the estimated cost of having ferry service done by the Steamship Authority's employees. Furthermore, the Steamship Authority has demonstrated that the quality of the private contractor's services will be at least equal to the work performed by the public authority's employees.

The privatization law requires the State Auditor to approve all contracts of \$200,000 or more if the agency can prove that the total cost of having the service performed by a private vendor is less than the in-house cost and the quality of service is likely to be equal or better.

"The Steamship Authority has met the cost and quality provisions of the Pacheco Law," said DeNucci. "The New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard route has been operating at a deficit. My office estimates that the authority should save over \$1 million for the two-year period."

